

presently is not under the lid, and I suggest to you the wisest thing for us to do is to keep it as is in perpetuity until we have a chance to study it some more in terms of who is going to pay. I have worked enough with the federal government to know that what they offer you today, tomorrow it may not be there, and then one more time you are going to have to support the program. I suggest that Senator Fowler has a wise amendment and I ask you, the members of this body, to support that. Thank you.

SPEAKER MARVEL: Senator Fowler, do you want to close on your amendment?

SENATOR FOWLER: The first point I would make is to re-iterate what Senator Koch said. This is not a precedent with this program. We have excluded it from the lid in the past. Now Senator Dworak gave a very beautiful and moving speech about how every program must be scrutinized and choices must be made, and that is exactly the intent with this amendment. The school districts will have no choice but to fund the mandated preschool program. They will have absolutely no choice. It is legally mandated, is detailed in law as to what that program shall consist of. There have been numerous court cases about special education, about implementing that. Further, with Senator Lamb's proposal, the money is a hundred percent state money. It will be sent there....state or federal....it will come from state sources. It will be there, and the school district will be under a legal mandate to provide that program, and the hundred percent funding will be there in front of them. They are not going to be able to choose gifted program versus preschool special education program. They are not going to be able to choose keeping X library open versus preschool special education. They are not going to be able to choose junior high instrumental music versus preschool education. They must go with preschool special education and they must then cut the gifted program, not provide junior high instrumental music and so on. Under a seven percent spending lid with the rate of inflation as it is, when a mandated program is in competition with an optional program, the optional program will be dropped and the mandated program is required. I am not offering this amendment so that preschool special education is not scrutinized. I am offering this amendment so that school districts do not get penalized, that other school programs do not get cut, because the school district must provide that preschool special education. My school board, Senator Lamb's school board, Senator Dworak's school board, has no choice about this program because we said